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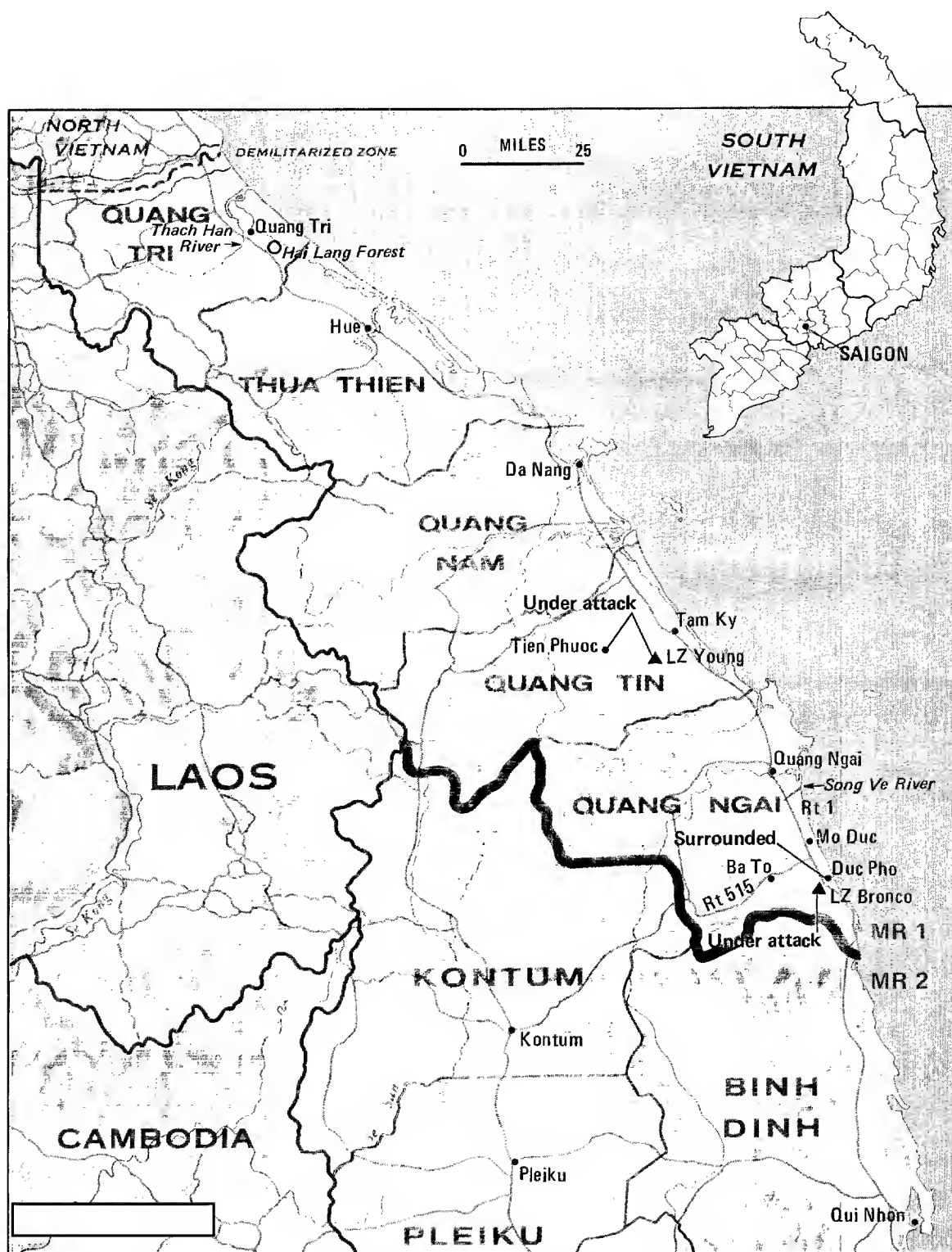
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VIETNAM: The situation in the coastal lowlands remains serious.

In Quang Ngai Province, Communist 2nd Division units have surrounded the district capital of Duc Pho and are launching heavy artillery attacks against it and Landing Zone Bronco to the south. The attacking forces are also employing wire-guided missiles, the first time this weapon has been used by Communist forces this far south in Military Region 1. Although enemy attacks against the town of Ba To eased somewhat over the weekend, government Ranger units trying to reach the town are still several miles east, and a North Vietnamese battalion reportedly is dug in along Route 515 to block their advance. In Mo Duc District, enemy units are still in control of parts of Route 1 between the district capital and the Song Ve River.

Fighting also picked up in Quang Tin Province over the weekend. Communist units renewed their attacks against the district capital of Tien Phuoc, and field reports indicate that heavy artillery fire and wire-guided missiles are being directed against the town and against Landing Zone Young to the southeast. North Vietnamese 711th Division units in the area may be trying to take advantage of the heavy fighting farther south in Quang Ngai Province to make a new push into the lowlands around the provincial capital of Tam Ky.

Action in Quang Tri Province was generally light over the weekend. Communist gunners increased their artillery barrages against government troops trying to clear areas north and south of town near the Thach Han River, but ground action was limited. More intense fighting, however, was reported farther south in the Hai Lang Forest as government units continued operations against an enemy buildup there.

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PHILIPPINES: President Marcos is moving quickly to try to enlist public support for his declaration of martial law while simultaneously arresting those who might become a focus for popular opposition.

Marcos' speech to the nation on 23 September indicated the tack he is going to take. After repeating allegations that there was a Communist conspiracy to overthrow the government, Marcos claimed that martial law was necessary because less drastic methods--in particular his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in 1971--had failed to check the growth of guerrilla forces. In an obvious move to elicit public endorsement of his actions, Marcos said that he will use his martial law powers to mold a "New Society" for the Philippines by disarming private political armies, eliminating corruption in government, controlling prices, and ensuring social and economic justice.

Marcos apparently believes that if he can prevent martial law from impinging too heavily on the daily life of the average citizen, serious opposition will be discouraged. He has already eased travel restrictions and allowed some newspapers to reopen--although under stringent military censorship. He has also announced a planned reorganization of the whole government, presumably so that it can get about the task of reforming society.

The first series of arrests under martial law was aimed not only at Communist conspirators but also at Marcos' political opponents, including some elected officials. Among those arrested are important leaders of anti-Marcos blocs in congress and the constitutional convention and respected newspapermen who have exposed the President's political manipulations.

Although Marcos' power play has thus far succeeded, the current, passive acceptance of martial law may be reversed as news of his political purge

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spreads. To remain on top of the situation, Marcos will have to keep his critics muzzled without using obvious force. Moreover, he will have to produce more evidence to bolster his charges of a conspiracy and make at least some superficial advances toward the "New Society."

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UGANDA: Fighting between Ugandan troops and remnants of a guerrilla force that invaded from Tanzania last week continues near the Tanzanian border.

The Ugandan Government claims that its troops pursued the guerrillas into Tanzania and are fighting both guerrillas and Tanzanian troops, but Dar es Salaam has denied that any fighting has occurred on its territory. There is a new report that some 400 Libyan troops arrived last week to augment Ugandan forces. Several African countries are attempting to mediate the dispute, and a Somali peace proposal has reportedly been accepted by Tanzanian President Nyerere. Ugandan President Amin has labeled the proposal "very good" but at the same time he threatened new attacks on Tanzania if it does not withdraw its troops from the border.

All US citizens detained by security forces have been released, but the security situation remains serious. Undisciplined soldiers continue to rough up Asians and settle tribal scores with other Ugandan Africans. US Peace Corp volunteers are being assembled in Kampala for evacuation. [REDACTED]

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